

THE WHITE HOUSE
Washington

TOP SECRET

May 26, 1962

NATIONAL SECURITY ACTION MEMORANDUM 156

TO: The Secretary of State¹
The Secretary of Defense
The Director of Central Intelligence
The Director, National Aeronautics and
Space Administration
The Director, Arms Control and Disarmament
Agency

1. We are now engaged in several international negotiations on disarmament and peaceful uses of outer space. These negotiations are likely to continue for a long time, and may well grow in scope. They raise the problem of what constitutes legitimate use of outer space, and in particular the question of satellite reconnaissance.

2. In view of the great national security importance of our satellite reconnaissance programs, I think it desirable that we carefully review these negotiations with a view to formulating a position which avoids the dangers of restricting ourselves, compromising highly classified programs, or providing assistance of significant military value to the Soviet Union and which at the same time permits us to continue to work for disarmament and international cooperation in space. Accordingly, I request that the Department of State organize a committee for this purpose, with representatives of all addressees with sufficient standing to permit them to be fully cognizant of all our programs in this area.

I wish to receive your report and recommendations by 1 July.

/s/ JFKennedy

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